This article describes the methodology of the continuing vocational training survey (CVTS) — the European Union (EU) harmonised survey on continuing vocational training. The CVTS provides comparable data on vocational training within the EU enterprises with at least 10 or more employed persons and belonging to a certain group of economic activities.

The CVTS along with the following two other data collections, the adult education survey (AES) and the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS) provide EU statistics on lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is defined as an intentional search for knowledge throughout life (after the end of initial education in particular). It is aimed at improving a person’s skills and competences for personal or professional reasons.

The CVTS is an EU-wide data collection on continuing vocational training carried out in enterprises. It refers to education and training activities financed totally or partially by the enterprise for their persons employed. The use of work-time and the acquisition of training equipment is also considered as financing.

The following topics are covered in the CVTS data:

- provision of CVT courses and other forms of CVT (training/non-training enterprises);
- CVT strategies;
- participants in CVT courses;
- costs of CVT courses;
- time spent in CVT courses;
- characteristics of CVT courses;
- assessment of CVT activities.

On top of these topics, some information on initial vocational training is also collected through the CVTS.

**Coverage and mandate**

Five waves of the CVTS have been carried out until now with the reference years 1993, 1999, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

**CVTS 1993**

The 1993 CVTS was carried out as a pilot survey with a sample of 50 000 enterprises in all EU Member States (at the time EU-12). The statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE) was used to classify the business sectors covered by the survey. Agriculture, fishing, public administration, education, health and social work, activities of households and extra-territorial organisations and bodies were not included (see Table 1). The 1993 survey had limited comparability with the following rounds. Its results were disseminated through the 1993 CVTS results publication.
CVTS 1999

The following round of the CVTS took place in 1999 and covered 24 of the current EU-28 Member States (Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovakia not included and only the region of Pomorskie was surveyed in Poland). This wave of the survey was conducted based on a gentlemen’s agreement, and used the same coverage of the business sectors as the 1993 CVTS. Detailed information on this round of CVTS can be found in the 1999 CVTS Manual. The 1999 CVTS data are available in Eurobase in the tables of the trng_cvts2 series. Despite the guidelines of the gentlemen’s agreement, the 1999 edition of the CVTS also had limited comparability with the other rounds.

CVTS 2005

The 2005 CVTS covered the EU-27 of that time and Norway. Regulation (EC) No 1552/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council established ‘a common framework for the production of European statistics on vocational training in enterprises’, and was the legal basis for the 2005 survey. This legislation was complemented by Commission Regulation No 198/2006 which sets out the specific details of the variables, sample size, transmission of the data and quality aspects of the CVTS. This third round of the survey continues to use the NACE Rev.1.1 classification for describing the economic sector of the enterprises.

CVTS 2010

Further legal arrangements (namely Commission Regulation (EU) No 822/2010, amending Regulation (EC) No 198/2006) were the framework for the fourth round of CVTS carried out for the reference year 2010. The changes were aimed at the simplification of variables, reducing the burden on respondents, adjusting the sampling and adapting it to the NACE Rev.2 classification. The geographical coverage included 27 EU Member States (excluding Ireland) and Norway.

Table 1: Continuing vocational training survey metadata

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference year</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Geographical coverage</th>
<th>Institutional mandate</th>
<th>NACE coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1993 CVTS Report</td>
<td>EU-12 Member States excluding Croatia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovakia. For Poland, only in the Pomorskie region.</td>
<td>gentlemen’s agreement</td>
<td>Rev. 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>trng_cvt</td>
<td>EU-2 Member States (excluding Croatia) and Norway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>trng_cvt</td>
<td>EU-28 Member States (excluding Ireland) and Norway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>trng_cvt</td>
<td>EU-28 Member States, Norway and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Metadata file trng_cvt_esms

CVTS 2015

CVTS 5 was carried out in 2016 for CVT activities that took place in 2015. Commission Regulation (EU) No 1153/2014 (amending Regulation (EC) No 198/2006) provides the implementation details for CVTS 5. While the majority of variables remained unchanged compared to CVTS 4 some variables were simplified or removed in order to further reducing the burden of CVTS to the extent possible. For details see the CVTS 5 implementation manual.
Detailed information on each round of the CVTS can be found in the complementary methodological information.

**Basic concepts**

Continuing vocational training (CVT) consists in training measures or activities which have as their primary objectives the acquisition of new competences or the development and improvement of existing ones and which must be financed at least partly by the enterprises for their persons employed who either have a working contract or who benefit directly from their work for the enterprise such as unpaid family workers and casual workers. Persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract should not be taken into consideration for CVT. The training measures or activities must be planned in advance and must be organised or supported with the special goal of learning. Random learning and initial vocational training (IVT) are explicitly excluded. CVT measures and activities cover both CVT courses and other forms of CVT.

**CVT courses**

CVT courses are usually separated from the active workplace (learning takes place in locations specially assigned for learning, like a class room or training centre). They show a high degree of organisation (time, space and content) by a trainer or a training institution. The content is designed for a group of learners (e.g. a curriculum exists). Two distinct types of CVT courses are identified: internal (managed by the enterprise itself) and external CVT courses (managed by third-party organisations).

**Other forms of CVT**

Other forms of CVT are typically connected to the active work and the active workplace, but they can also include participation (instruction) in conferences, trade fairs, etc. for the purpose of learning. These other forms of CVT are often characterised by a degree of self-organisation (time, space and content) by the individual learner or by a group of learners. The content is often tailored according to the learners’ individual needs in the workplace. The following types of other forms of CVT are identified:

- planned training through guided on-the-job training;
- planned training through job rotation, exchanges, secondments or study visits;
- planned training through participation (instruction received) in conferences, workshops, trade fairs and lectures;
- planned training through participation in learning or quality circles; and
- planned training through self-directed learning/e-learning.

**Training enterprises**

Training enterprises are enterprises that provided either CVT courses or other forms of CVT for their persons employed during the reference year.

**Participant in CVT courses**

A participant in CVT courses is a person who has taken part in one or more CVT courses during the reference year. Each person should be counted only once, irrespective of the number of CVT courses they have participated in (e.g. if a person employed has participated in two externally managed courses and one internally managed course, they should be counted as one participant).

**Costs of CVT courses**

The costs of CVT courses cover:

- fees and payments for CVT courses;
- travel and subsistence payments related to CVT courses;
- the labour costs of internal trainers for CVT courses (direct and indirect costs); and
• the costs for training centre, training rooms and teaching materials.

CVT course costs also include the cost of contributions made by the enterprise to collective funding arrangements through government and intermediary organisations but exclude receipts from collective funding arrangements, subsidies and financial assistance from government and other sources.

**Time spent on CVT courses**

Time spent on CVT courses refers to paid working time (in hours) spent on CVT courses, i.e. the time that all participants have spent in total during the reference year. This should only cover the actual training time, and only the time spent during the paid working time.

**Initial vocational training**

Since 2005, the CVTS contains some variables on initial vocational training (IVT). IVT within enterprises is defined as a formal education programme (or a component of it) where working time alternates between periods of practical training (workplace) and general/theoretical education (educational institution/training centre). The definition of IVT differs between CVTS waves, for details see the implementation manuals for each wave, available in CIRCABC.

**Number of persons employed**

The number of persons employed is defined as the total number of persons who work in the observation unit excluding persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract (i.e. the definition of persons employed in CVTS deviates from the one used for structural business statistics as regards the treatment of persons employed holding an apprenticeship or training contract).

For additional definitions used in CVTS and further information see the CVTS implementation manuals available in CIRCABC.

**Usual breakdowns and classifications**

**Principal economic activity of the enterprise**

The classification of economic activities (NACE) is used in the CVTS to describe the economic sector of the enterprises. NACE is a four-digit classification providing the framework for collecting and presenting a large range of statistical data according to economic activity in various statistical data sets. Several versions have been developed since 1970. NACE Rev.1.1 was used for the first three rounds of CVTS and NACE Rev.2 for the 2010 and 2015 rounds.

**Size class**

A threshold of 10 persons employed is applied as the minimum for the coverage of enterprises. The classification of the size of the enterprises uses the following classes:

- Small — from 10 to 49 persons employed
- Medium — from 50 to 249 persons employed
- Large — 250 persons employed and more

**Source data for tables and graphs**

- [Download Excel file](#)

**Context**

**Education statistics in the EU**

Eurostat publishes data on education and training which can be found on Eurostat’s database and cover the following features:
• participation in education and training;
• learning mobility;
• education personnel;
• education finance;
• education and training outcomes;
• languages.

These statistics are based on four main data sources:
• Education systems – joint UNESCO-OECD-Eurostat (UOE) data collection;
• Adult education survey (AES);
• Continuing vocational training survey (CVTS); and
• Labour force survey (EU-LFS).

Statistics on lifelong learning – which can be found under the folders 'adult learning' and 'continuing vocational training in enterprises' in the 'participation in education and training' section of Eurostat’s database on education and training – are based on the AES, the LFS and the CVTS.

The adult education survey and the labour force survey both provide data on participation in lifelong learning from the individuals’ perspective while the CVTS covers the theme of lifelong learning through the enterprises’ viewpoint (continuing vocational training).

Other articles
• Education and training in the EU - facts and figures

Database
Education and training (educ)

• 2005, 2010 and 2015 data, see:

Participation in education and training (educ_part)

Continuing vocational training in enterprises (trng_cvt)

• 1999 data, see:

Past series (trng_h)

Continuing vocational training in enterprises — reference year 1999 (trng_cvts2)

Dedicated section
• Education and training

Publications
• Vocational education and training statistics
• Access to microdata
Methodology

- Continuing vocational training in enterprises (reference metadata)
- CVTS — EU implementation manuals and further methodological information

External links

- EU policy in the field of vocational education and training (VET)
- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

View this article online at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Article_name